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Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 /125 W
----------101301 280606Z /23
R 271957Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2928
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 5372

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, PN
SUBJECT: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: MULTILATERAL INFORMATION ON PANAMA

REF: A. STATE 148782; B. STATE 159747; C. 76 PANAMA 1545

1. THE EMBASSY IN REF C GAVE AN EXTENDED RESPONSE TO A REQUEST FOR MULTILATERAL INFORMATION ON PANAMA IN 1976. THAT CABLE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED THE EMBASSY'S REPLY TO REFS A AND B, EXCEPT AS NOTED BELOW.

A. THE LAST SENTENCE OF PARA 1 (A) OF REF C IS NO LONGER RELEVANT AND SHOULD BE DELETED.

B. WITH RESPECT TO PARA 2 (B) OF REF C, THERE HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENT SHIFTS IN THE EMPHASIS OF PANAMANIAN FOREIGN POLICY TO CAUSE SMALL BUT SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE INTERRELATIONSHIPS OF PANAMA'S MULTILATERAL POLICY. IN THE FIRST PLACE, PANAMA HAS SOUGHT A CLOSER IDENTIFICATION WITH THE THIRD WORLD. THIS HAS BEEN MANIFESTED IN MANY WAYS, MOST NOTABLY TORRIJOS' VISIST TO THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE IN
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SRI LANKA IN AUGUST 1976 AND TO LIBYA IN APRIL 1977. THIS HAS LED TO SOMEWHAT INCREASED TENSIONS (AND CORRESPONDINGLY LESS INFLUENCE) WITH ISRAEL. SIMILARLY, PANAMA HAS BROKEN LATIN SOLIDARITY ON AT LEAST ONE ISSUE, BELIZE, IN AN EFFORT TO BUILD UP FURTHER SUPPORT IN THE THIRD WORLD OUTSIDE THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE. THE INFLUENCE OF VENEZUELA HAS CONTINUED TO GROW, AND COLOMBIA, COSTA RICA AND MEXICO CONTINUE TO BE

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INFLUENTIAL WITH PANAMA'S LEADERSHIP. SINCE PANAMA'S FOREIGN POLICY HAS FOR MANY YEARS BEEN GEARED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A MORE FAVORABLE TREATY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S., IT IS DIFFICULT TO SAY WHAT PANAMA'S POLICY WOULD BE IF A SATISFACTORY NEW TREATY SHOULD TO INTO EFFECT. A NEW TREATY WOULD TEND TO REDUCE THE TREMENDOUS DISTORTION WHICH HAS CAUSED PANAMA TO LOOK AT VIRTUALLY ALL ISSUES IN TERMS OF WHAT THEY DO TO PROMOTE OR IMPEDE ITS CANAL POLICY. BUT PANAMA WILL IN ALL LIKELIHOOD CONTINUE FOR SOME TIME TO SEEK THIRD WORLD SUPPORT--IN CASE THE NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. SHOULD TURN SOUR.

C. THE INFORMATION IN PARA 4 (D) ABOUT OAS REPRESENTATION REMAINS VALID.HOWEVER, THE REPLACEMENT OF AQUILINO BOYD BY JORGE ILLUECA AS AMBASSADOR TO THE UN HAS OCCURRED SINCE REF C WAS WRITTEN. ILLUECA, THOUGH LESS DYNAMIC AND INFLUENTIAL POLITICALLY THAN BOYD, IS STILL TO A CONSIDERABLE EXTENT HIS OWN MAN. HE IS ONLY TECHNICALLY A SUBORDINATE OF FOREIGN MINISTER GONZALEZ-REVILLA AND HAS DIRECT ACCESS TO CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT TORRIJOS.

D. THE COMMENTS IN THIS SUBPARAGRAPH ARE DIRECTED TO THE SPECIFIC ISSUES RAISED IN PARA 3 OF REF A. -- NORTH-SOUTH ECONOMIC ISSUES. BECAUSE THE CANAL ISSUE IS PARAMOUNT HERE, PANAMA DEVOTES LESS ATTENTION TO NORTH-SOUTH ECONOMIC ISSUES THAN DO MANY LDC'S. IN REAL LIFE, PANAMA GENERALLY LEANS TOWARD CONFIDENTIAL

A FREE-MARKET ECONOMY. BUT BECAUSE OF ITS POLITICAL ASSOCIATION WITH THE THIRD WORLD, IT USUALLY VOTES DISTINCTLY "SOUTHERN" IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. NEVERTHELESS, ON AN ISSUE WHERE ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO PANAMA ARE INVOLVED, IDEOLOGY MAY NOT ALWAYS BE ALLOWED TO GET IN THE WAY OF A GOOD THING.

-- HUMAN RIGHTS. THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT IS GENERALLY IN SYMPATHY WITH A FORWARD POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS. BUT IT IS BECOMING MORE SENSITIVE ABOUT ACCUSATIONS THAT HUMAN RIGHTS ARE VIOLATED IN PANAMA. IN ADDITION, IT LOOKS FOR SUPPORT ON THE CANAL ISSUE WHERE IT CAN FIND IT; FOR EXAMPLE, ITS RELATIONS WITH CHILE HAVE RECENTLY IMPROVED, AS CHILE HAS BECOME AN OUTSPOKEN PROPONENT OF PANAMA'S POSITION ON THE CANAL.

-- UN BUDGET CONTROL AND STRUCTUAL ISSUES. PANAMA'S POSITION IS VERY LIKELY TO BE DETERMINED BY THE PANAMANIAN AMBASSADOR.

-- UN SPECIALIZED AGENCIES. AS LONG AS THE CANAL ISSUE IS WITH US, PANAMA IS LIKELY TO WANT TO USE ANY FORUM IT CAN FIND TO PRESSURE THE U.S. VIZ, ITS POSITION IN THE ILO CONFERENCE.

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2. EMBASSY OFFICER DEALING WITH MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS IS
RUTH HANSEN.
JORDEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PANAMA05372
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770270-0116
Format: TEL
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770714/aaaaalol.tel
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Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 148782, 77 STATE 159747, 76 PANAMA 1545
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1734424
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS: MULTILATERAL INFORMATION ON PANAMA
TAGS: PORG, PN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/920ff762-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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